

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /090 W

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R 181940Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1413

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18701

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, FT, FR

SUBJECT: TFAI OFFICIAL'S CONCERNS ABOUT TERRITORY'S
FUTURE

REF: PARIS 17697

SUMMARY: AN OFFICIAL OF THE TFAI GOVT BELIEVES THAT
INTERNAL PRESSURES MAY FORCE THE FRENCH GOVT TO GRANT
PREMATURE INDEPENDENCE TO THE TERRITORY AND THAT A
POSSIBLE LEFTIST LEGISLATIVE VICTORY IN THE 1978
FRENCH ELECTIONS WOULD INSURE THAT RESULT. APPARENTLY
IN COOPERATION WITH FRENCH AUTHORITIES, ALI AREF IS
SEEKING TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE ISSAS AND TO BUILD
UP EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR AN INDEPENDENT TFAI. NEITHER
THE FRENCH NOR ALI AREF'S FOLLOWERS ARE SANGUINE ABOUT
THE RESULTS OF THESE EFFORTS. END SUMMARY
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1. A MAN CARRYING TFAI IDENTITY CARD NO. 17, ISSUED TO ABDALLAH MOHAMED KHAMIL, BORN IN 1937, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TFAI (AND WHOSE REMARKS IN ALMOST FLAWLESS FRENCH APPEARED TO CONFIRM THAT IDENTITY) CALLED ON EMBOFF JULY 18. AFTER A CONCISE AND ACCURATE EXPOSE OF THE HISTORY AND PRESENT SITUATION OF DJIBOUTI AS SEEN BY AN AFAR, KHAMIL CAME TO THE APPARENT PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT: GIVEN THE PROBABILITY THAT FRANCE WILL GRANT THE TFAI INDEPENDENCE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, IS THERE ANY POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. WOULD BE WILLING AT THAT TIME TO REPLACE FRANCE IN GUARANTEEING AN INDEPENDENT TFAI? EMBOFF REPLIED THAT WHILE THE U.S. HAS A CONTINUING GREAT INTEREST IN STABILITY IN THE HORN, CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING IN THE U.S. FOLLOWING THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE ARE SUCH THAT THE USG, IN THE UNLIKELY CASE IT MIGHT WISH TO DO SO, WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE ANY SUCH GUARANTEE.

2. KHAMIL, WHO SAID HE WAS "MORE OR LESS" SPEAKING FOR ALI AREF, MADE SOME INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS. ADMITTING HE WANTED THE FRENCH TO REMAIN IN THE TFAI AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, KHAMIL SAID HIS GREATEST FEAR IS THAT THE 1978 FRENCH LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WILL RETURN A LEFTIST MAJORITY WHICH WOULD PROMPTLY GRANT INDEPENDENCE. HE THOUGHT NO AMOUNT OF PERSUASION WOULD CONVINCE THE SOCIALISTS OF THE IRRESPONSIBILITY OF SUCH AN ACT WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE SLAUGHTER OF MANY OF THE TERRITORY'S INHABITANTS BY THE SOMALIS OR THE ETHIOPIANS OR BY BOTH. MITTERRAND, HE SAID, WANTED "VENGEANCE" FOR DJIBOUTI'S VOTE FOR GISCARD AND, MOREOVER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT ANY REPLACEMENT FOR ALI AREF COULD CHANGE MITTERRAND'S MIND.

2. KHAMIL ALSO IS CONCERNED THAT THE GROWING PRESSURE BY THE PRESS ON THE GISCARD GOVERNMENT MIGHT FORCE IT TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE PREMATURELY. HE THOUGHT AFRICAN AND ARAB PRESSURES WERE LESS IMPORTANT BUT SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED IN THEIR FUTURE INFLUENCE ON GOF DECISIONS.

3. KHAMIL MENTIONED THE RECENT VISITS TO A NUMBER OF
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AFRICAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES (SENEGAL, IVORY COAST, CAMEROON, CAR, EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA, NORTH YEMEN) OF TFAI GOVT MISSIONS. WHILE HE SAID THE MISSIONS WERE WELL-RECEIVED (AND HAD THE FULL BACKING OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT), HE INTIMATED THAT THE EFFORT TO TRY TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR OAU AND ARAB LEAGUE GUARANTEES FOR AN EVENTUALLY FREE TFAI GARNERED LITTLE BEYOND VERBAL CHAMPIONING AMONG AFRO-ARAB LEADERS.

4. KHAMIL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CURRENT TFAI GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF 5 AFARS AND 4 ISSAS DOES NOT, IN FACT, REPRESENT THE MAJORITY OF ISSAS. HE THOUGHT THE AFARS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A SINCERE EFFORT TO GIVE THE ISSAS MORE RESPONSIBILITY IN RUNNING LOCAL AFFAIRS. GIVEN THE DISTRUST OF MANY ISSAS AND SOMALIS FOR THE SIAD

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BARRE GOVERNMENT, HE SPECULATED THAT A GENUINE SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE ISSAS WOULD INDUCE AT LEAST 60 PERCENT OF THEM TO FAVOR INDEPENDENCE OVER UNION WITH SOMALIA.

5. ON ETHIOPIA, KHAMIL SAID THAT ALI MIRAH DOES NOT WISH TO SECEDE, BUT WANTS AFAR LAND BACK, PLUS LOCAL

AUTONOMY. HE DENIED ACCUSATIONS THAT EITHER ALI AREF OR ALI MIRAH WISHES TO FORM AN AFAR STATE. (KHAMIL PLANS TO VISIT THE LATTER IN SAUDI ARABIA NEXT MONTH.) HE HOPES ETHIOPIA'S LEADERS WILL COME TO SEE THE WISDOM OF GRANTING LOCAL AUTONOMY TO ALL OF THE EMPIRE'S ETHNIC GROUPS, A SITUATION WHICH MIGHT EASE THE WAY TO FINDING A SOLUTION FOR DJIBOUTI.

6. COMMENT: KHAMIL IS BRIGHT AND ARTICULATE AND VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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WORRIED ABOUT FUTURE FRENCH POLICY TOWARDS THE TFAI. IN LOOKING AHEAD, HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE FRENCH IN AN EFFORT TO DEVELOP A MODUS-VIVENDI WHICH WOULD PERMIT AN INDEPENDENT TFAI TO OFFER HOSPITALITY TO A FRENCH BASE BUT WHICH WOULD PROVIDE NON-FRENCH GUARANTEES FOR THE NEW STATE'S SECURITY. BOTH ALI AREF'S DEPUTY AND THE FRENCH (SEE REF) APPEAR TO BE WORKING ON THE THEORY THAT RECONCILIATION BETWEEN AFARS AND ISSAS AND AFRICAN AND ARAB SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED NEW STATE ARE REQUIRED AND THAT THESE GOALS SHOULD BE PURSUED VIGOROUSLY. NEITHER THE FRENCH NOR KHAMIL IS SANGUINE ABOUT THE OUTCOME. THE LATTER'S APPROACH TO THE EMBASSY IS PROBABLY MORE A SIGN OF DESPARATION THAN A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO SECURE A FUTURE AMERICAN GUARANTEE. GAMMON

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